

## Why I'm Spiritually Dry, Part 7 - Romans 14:22-23 – June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013

- Today's teaching will be part seven of a series I've titled; "Why I'm Spiritually Dry."
- Bare with me for just a moment as I quickly go through the ones we've looked at the past six weeks, which will bring chapter 14 to an end.

### 1. Legalism (Verses 1-2)

### 2. Judgmentalism (Verses 3-4)

### 3. Denominationalism (Verses 5-9)

### 4. Phariseeism (Verses 10-12)

### 5. Liberalism (Verses 13-14)

### 6. Narcissism (Verses 15-18)

### 7. Individualism (Verses 19-21)

### 8. Relativism (Verses 22-23)

- v22 Paul says whatever we believe about this is between us and God, and we'll be blessed not condemning ourselves by what we approve.
- v23 He goes on to say, if we have doubts, we're condemned if we eat, because our eating is not from faith, and as such it will become sin.

- In order to better understand what the Holy Spirit is saying through the Apostle Paul, we would do well to first know what he is not saying.
- Let me explain, the Apostle Paul is not saying that we should keep whatever we believe about our faith just between ourselves, and God.
- Rather, what he is saying is to keep whatever we believe by faith concerning the aforementioned disputable matters between us, and God.

- Actually, and perhaps more importantly, it's not so much that we keep it between us, and God as much as it is that we are resolute about it.
- In other words, we must be both resolute and absolute when it comes to these disputable matters, such that we have resolved this issue.
- I'm of the belief the evidence is the emphasis that Paul places on any ambiguity in verse twenty-two when he talks about us having doubt.

- Enter the ambiguity of relativism, which is the archenemy of the absolute truth and the resolute faith that comes vis-à-vis the Word of God.
- So much so that doubting, under the banner of truth being relative, rises to the level of condemnation and sin to those buying into this lie.
- It's for this reason that Paul is compelled to say how the one who does this is sinning by virtue of the fact that his eating is not from faith.

Charles Spurgeon - "Do you feel quite sure upon such matters? Keep it within thine own bosom, but do not worry others with it. ...If you are not sure that a thing is right, let it alone for it will be sin to you."

I suppose this is as good of a place as any to define relativism in the context of our text here in Romans. I like how one online dictionary defines it, they say relativism is the doctrine that knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute.

- Here's the bottom line, this truth here in God's Word is most unforgiving of anyone who is still squishy when it comes to the "grey areas."
- Perhaps better said, this is one truth in God's Word that is most condemning of anyone who is not absolute in resolving this with the Lord.
- Personally, I'm quite moved by the intensity of the Apostles admonition as it relates to the seriousness with which he addresses "doubt."

- The reason being is that the sanctified strength, in which Paul writes about doubt, would seem to indicate just how destructive it could be.
- Here's what I'm thinking, if doubting can bring the condemnation of sin upon me, then it stands to reason that it will be a hindrance to me.
- And, if it's a hindrance causing me to stumble and fall, then it's a foregone conclusion it's a hindrance causing others to stumble and fall.

James 1:6-8 NIV But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. (7) That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; (8) he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

- It's this description by James of the instability on the part of one who is not absolute and resolute sort of paints a rather tormenting picture.
- In other words, the one who doubts, having not settled by faith anything from the Lord between him and the Lord would be neurotic at best.
- Could this be why it is that Paul describes the one who has settled it and does not doubt as being blessed, in the second part of verse 22.

One commentator said it best this way; "You're a happy man if you're not condemning yourself, if you're not bound up with regulations. If you engage in an activity only to prove a point to yourself or others, you'll bring damnation upon yourself—not eternal damnation, but present depression and destruction. "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity," wrote the psalmist in Psalm 133:1. What does this mean? Augustine summed it up best when he said, "In essentials, there must be unity. In nonessentials, there must be liberty. But in all things, there must be charity." May God give us wisdom to walk in both liberty and love."

- I can't think of a better way to bring the chapter, and with it the sermon, to a close. Here's why, my squishy relativism may be why I'm dry.
- Perhaps we need look no further than the tormenting that comes packaged with the condemning, that is ultimately draining me spiritually.
- Sadly, what ends up being drained out, and dried up, is all my spiritual happiness, and as such I will no longer taste from the full cup of joy.

Another commentator so aptly wrote, "Not every Christian knows this happiness. There are things God may challenge us to give up, but we go on approving them in our life - thus we condemn ourselves. It may not be that the thing itself is clearly good or bad, but it is enough that God has spoken to us about this matter. ...Each of us must ask: 'God what is there in my life hindering a closer walk with You? I want to know the happiness that comes from not condemning myself by what I approve in my life.' This takes faith, because we often cling to hindering things because we think they make us happy. Real happiness is found being closer and closer to Jesus, and by not being condemned by what we approve."